

"The wood from which the bows are made is a variety of chonta palm, called síri. This tree, when mature, is about 12 inches in diameter and has a layer about 2 inches thick of very hard, black wood just underneath the bark. It is from this layer that the bow is constructed. Although the material is relatively abundant in the environment, before making a new bow a hunter will search for some time to locate a chonta tree which has the appearance of being of proper maturity and hardness. It is a rare tree that has just the right qualities. The wood must be firm and resilient and must withstand the maximum pulling strength of the hunter without breaking. Frequently I have seen a man spend a couple of days in the construction of a bow only to have it snap on the first pull.

After a suitable tree has been sighted it is felled. I have never seen this done other than with an ax, but one of my oldest informants told me that he had known chonta palms to be felled by building a fire against the trunk until the hard layer had been burned through and then pushing the tree over. When a tree has been felled, a section of the circumference of the trunk, about 4 inches wide and as long as the hunter wants his bow to be, is cut out. Other smaller pieces of chonta may also be removed at this time, as this material is likewise indispensable in the construction of arrows."

1: Holmberg--30 [2]

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Siriono

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"There is likewise no shortage of firewood. The forest is full of dead and rotten trees that make excellent fuel."